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## THE ETYMOLOGY OF ITALIAN *GREGGIO*, *GREZZO*.

THE most recent detailed study of the Italian word appearing in the forms *greggio* and *grezzo* is D' Ovidio's extended discussion in *Romania*, Vol. XXV, pp. 295 ff. This scholar agrees with Fumi<sup>1</sup> in rejecting the etymon *agrestis*<sup>2</sup> suggested by Caix<sup>3</sup> and likewise the type *\*gregius* set up by Canello.<sup>4</sup> The etymon *\*ἄγρικός* [!] proposed by Roensch<sup>5</sup> appears never to have been taken very seriously. The type which D' Ovidio accepts as the probable etymon, namely *\*grēvius*, was first suggested by Fumi, who, however, was not able to explain the phonetic irregularities which the assumption of such an etymon involves. D' Ovidio attempts to overcome the difficulties by assuming that the word came into Tuscan from Venetian territory. According to him, by the side of *\*levius* (>*leggio*) for *levis*, a form *\*grēvius* for *\*grevis* may have existed in colloquial Latin. Then just as *pluvia* gave in Venetian *pioza* (nowadays *piova*), so *\*grēvius* may have given *\*grezo*. The *e* in this word would probably have been close, according to D' Ovidio, as in Venetian *greve* and *grue greva*. The meaning of *greggio*, *grezzo* is "rough, unworked." Since, during the Middle Ages, the Venetians excelled in the various arts, it is possible that this word *\*grezo* came into common use among them as a technical term and was borrowed as such by Tuscans. Assuming this introduction of the word into Tuscany, it may also be assumed, according to D' Ovidio, that some Tuscans would accept *\*grezo* in the form *grezzo*, while others would substitute for the Venetian *z* the group which usually represents this Venetian sound in Tuscan, *i. e.*, *ġġ* (cf. Venetian *mazor*, *pezo*, etc.).

This etymon *\*grēvius* is the only one thus far proposed meriting serious consideration now, since *agrestis* and *\*gregius* have

<sup>1</sup> *Misc.* Caix-Canello, pp. 99 ff.

<sup>2</sup> This etymon is also rejected by PARIS (*Romania*, Vol. VIII, p. 618).

<sup>3</sup> *Studia di etimologia italiana e romanza*, § 39.

<sup>4</sup> *Archivio glottologico*, Vol. III, p. 348.

<sup>5</sup> *Rom. Forsch.*, Vol. III, p. 372.

already been disposed of by Paris and Fumi.<sup>1</sup> Now, *grévius*, notwithstanding D' Ovidio's argumentation, still presents great difficulties. In the first place, we may, of course, doubt whether the word ever existed; but admitting the possibility of its existence, it may again be doubted whether it would have developed into *\*grezo* in the dialect of Venice, since D' Ovidio gives only one word showing the development *vy* > *z*, and in that very case the modern dialect shows not *z*, but *v*. Admitting, however, again that in this assumed word the development *vy* > *z* may actually have taken place in Venice, it is difficult to suppose that the word passed from Venetian into Tuscan in both Venetian and Tuscanized form, so as to give both *grezzo* and *greggio* in Tuscan. For this last assumption not a single parallel is cited. And, above all, why go to Venice to find an explanation for word-forms which, according to all manifest probabilities, originated in Tuscany? Taken all together, these objections are certainly serious. D' Ovidio, it should be said, is quite aware of the weak points in his theory, and claims only to have established a probability in favor of *\*grévius*. Körting, who discusses the Fumi-D' Ovidio theory under the word *agrestis*,<sup>2</sup> reaches the following result: "Aber auch Fumi's annahme hat keineswegs die wahrscheinlichkeit für sich, und die ableitung des wortes muss als noch fraglich bezeichnet werden, wie das schon Diez 377 gethan hatte."

It is thus quite in place to suggest a new etymon. Thus far etymologists, taking the meaning of the Italian word as their starting-point, have looked for an etymon meaning something like "rough." Having found or invented an ancient word giving approximately the right meaning, they have been constrained to assume an unparalleled development of one or another consonant-group in order to explain the phonetic relation of the Italian word to the etymon proposed. I believe that a start taken from the form of the Italian word leads to better results. The consonants *zz* beside *jj* almost certainly presuppose an ancient word in *dy* (cf. *razzo* beside *raggio* < *radium*, *mezzo* < *medium*, *rozzo* < *\*rudium*, beside *moggio* < *modium*, *poggio* < *podium*, etc.). No other

<sup>1</sup> The etymon *gregeos* (Old French), suggested by PETROCCHI in his *Dizionario scolastico*, presents insuperable phonetic difficulties.

<sup>2</sup> The Italian words are missing in Körting's index.

combination unquestionably giving both *ġġ* and *zz* in Tuscan has ever been cited. We should certainly look first of all for an ancient *\*gredius*, the development of which into both *greggio* and *grezzo* would not present the slightest phonetic difficulty. Now *\*gredius* is not attested, but a very near neighbor, namely *gerdius*, is found. It occurs in Lucilius apud Nonium Marcellum 118, 10, and in Julius Firmicus Maternus 8, 25 *med.* This word *gerdius*, which is given as meaning "weaver," is the Latin form of the Greek *γέρδιος*. The citation from Lucilius points to a very early borrowing, so that we are obliged to assume that the *e* of the Latin word was close, as was the Greek *ε* in early times. The passage from *gerdius* to *\*gredius* of course offers a slight difficulty, but is rendered probable enough by parallels such as Provençal *tresol* beside *tersol* < *tertiolus*, Italian *tropo*, French *trop*, probably going back to *porp*, Italian dialectic *trevetino* beside *tever-tino* < *tibur-tinus*, Old French *troubler* beside *tourbler* < *turbulare*, Old French *trousseau* beside *torseau*, Italian *torsello*, French *treuil* beside Italian *torchio* < *torculum*, Spanish *trujal* < *torcular*. I cite these few examples from Körting, and refer for others to Meyer-Lübke,<sup>1</sup> who expressly remarks: "Namentlich stark ausgeprägt ist die tendenz *r* mit dem anlautenden konsonanten zu verbinden." The closest parallel among the examples cited by Meyer-Lübke is that of *crovus* for *corvus*, occurring in western upper Italy and in Sicily. I have not been able to find any parallel showing an *r* passing over to an initial *g*; but this is not surprising in view of the fact that the number of words presenting an initial *g* followed by vowel + *r* is comparatively small. Moreover, parallels of this type, if existing, would be etymologically obscure on account of the metathesis, and for that reason could not readily be located. A possible physiological cause for the shift from *gerdius* to *\*gredius* is not far to seek: when non-syllabic *i* became *y*, the group *erdy* was doubtless unique and difficult to pronounce, so that the shift to the easily articulated *gredy* might well be expected.

I now turn to the semasiological development of *gerdius*. Since, as has been said, the Latin word is attested twice appar-

<sup>1</sup> *Rom. Gram.*, Vol. I, p. 481.

ently in the meaning of "weaver," while the Italian word is an adjective meaning "rough, unworked," the shift in sense which must be assumed appears to present considerable difficulty. A reference to the dictionary shows, however, that the Italian word is commonly used in phrases which immediately suggest an ancient connection in sense with a word meaning something like "weaver." Petrocchi's article on the Italian word reads as follows:

*Grèggio*,<sup>1</sup> *grezzo*, aggettivo. La materia delle diverse arti prima che sia lavorata. Come sono estratti dalle miniere. *Legno*, *Lana*, *Lino*, *Canapa gregge*: prima che sian lavorate. *Seta greggia*: adoprata come esce dalla filanda e collo stesso colore. *Tela greggia*: di lino grigiastria, piuttosto ruvida. *Ragazzi*, *Animi*, *Menti greggi*: non ancora educati, istruiti.

It is quite easy to derive all these meanings from the fundamental notion of "pertaining to the weaver." We have only to postulate the series: (1) "weaver's," (2) "fresh-woven," (3) "rough and untrimmed" (of cloth), (4) "rough and unworked" (of other materials). If Forcellini is right in assuming that the Latin word meant "carder" rather than "weaver," we may modify the scheme as follows: (1) "carder's," (2) "for the carder," i. e., "rough" (of the various materials which are carded, such as wool, flax, etc.), (3) "rough, unworked" (of other materials like silk, wood, minerals). The only point presenting difficulty is the shift from the value "weaver" or "carder" to the value "weaver's" or "carder's." We might perhaps assume that the noun *greggio* = "weaver" or "carder," going out of use in prehistoric Italian except in phrases like *tela a greggio* or *lana a greggio*, phonetically *telaggreġġo*, *lanaggreġġo*, came to be felt as an adjective, whence *tela greggia*, *lana greggia*. It seems probable, however, that the adjectival use of Italian *greggio* has a more ancient origin, going back to an adjectival use of the Greek and Latin words. The etymology and original meaning of γέπδιος are not apparent, but Du Cange cites a gloss defining it with the words ὑφάντρια, ὑφαντής, proving that it was feminine as well as masculine. It thus shows resemblance in form to the class of adjectives

<sup>1</sup> Petrocchi is certainly wrong in marking the *e* of *greggio* as open, since D' Ovidio (article cited, p. 296) states that "[*greggio*] ha l' *e* in tutta Toscana e su ogni labbro italiano che non sia inetto a distinguere i due suoni dell' *e*."

which may be declined with either two or three endings. Moreover, the collateral forms *γερδιός*, *γερδαίος*, *γερδείος* must constitute with *γέρδιος* an adjectival group. Adjective doublets like *ἄγριος* and *ἀγρείος* from *ἄγρος*, *Βάκχειος* (*Βακχείος*) and *Βάκχιος* from *Βάκχος*, *δούλιος* and *δούλειος* from *δούλος*, *θαλάσσιος* and *θαλασσαίος* from *θάλασσα*, may be seen on every other page of the lexicon, and even triplets like *λοχείος*, *λοχαίος*, and *λόχιος* from *λόχος* *νυμφεῖος*, *νυμφαίος*, and *νύμφιος* from *νύμφη*, are not extremely uncommon. Since a similar formation of original nouns is out of the question, we must place the group *γέρδιος*, *γερδιός*, *γερδείος*, *γερδαίος* in the same category, in spite of the fact that they are attested as substantives only. It is thus clear that *γέρδιος*—meagerly attested in both Greek and Latin in the meaning of “weaver,” was originally an adjective (meaning<sup>1</sup> probably “pertaining to the web,” or “pertaining to the card”); and it may

<sup>1</sup> Forms of *γέρδιος* are not given by the ordinary lexicons; they occur almost exclusively in glosses. The forms given in Hesychius and Suidas, in SOPHOCLES'S *Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine Periods*, in the *Middle Latin and Middle Greek Lexicons* of DUCANGE, in the *Corpus Glossariorum Latinorum*, in JOHANNES MEURSIUS'S *Lexicon Graeco-barbarum* (Greek-Latin dictionary, Sugduni Batavorum, anno CIO.IC.C.XIV.), and in STEPHANUS'S *Thesaurus Graecae Linguae*, which have been sent to me by my friends Dr. J. C. Watson, of Cornell University, and Mr. E. Cary, Fellow in Harvard University, are as follows: *γέρδης*, *γέρδιος*, *γερδαίος*, *γερδείος*, all defined as meaning *ὑφάντης*, *textor*; *γέρδιος* = *ὑφάντρια*, *ὑφάντης*; *γερδία* = *textrix*; *γερδίσαι* = *textrices*; *γερδοποιόν* (for *γερδοποιεῖον* ?) = *textrinum*; *συγγέρδαι* = *συννυφάντριαι*; *γερδιακός*. With regard to the etymology of *γέρδιος*, Stephanus notes: “Secundum Schneid. est ab Aeolico *ἔρδω* pro *ἔργω*,” but this derivation is obviously objectionable. Forcellini s. v. says: “Ipsa certe vox peregrina est: videtur enim esse a Chald. *garday* quod vulgo vertitur *textor*; sed cum Hebr. *garad* significet *decorticavit*, vero [*sic!*] simile est interpretandum esse carminatorem, Italice *cardatore*, a carduis nempe quibus in carminando utitur.” This view of the origin of *γέρδιος* is mentioned and rejected by the editor of the *Thesaurus Syriacus*, who accepts the derivation of the Semitic group from the Greek. The Semitic forms, for which I am indebted to Mr. Cary, are as follows: Chaldaic *garday* = “weaver;” Hebrew *garod* = “*decorticavit*” (*ἀπαξ λελεγμένον* occurring in the Book of Job); Syriac *gardā* = “*glaber, tela, textura, iugum textoris* (loom-beam),” *gardayā* = “*textor*,” *grad* = “*erasit, scalpsit, delevit*,” Modern Syriac *jrādā* = “*carpet woven on a frame*,” *jerdī* = “*the frame for weaving carpets*” and “*the carpets themselves*.” (Lexicons: J. LEVY, *Chalddisches Wörterbuch, etc.*, Leipzig, 1867; *Thesaurus Syriacus* . . . edidit R. P. SMITH, Oxford, 1879; J. BRUN, *Dictionarium Syriaco-Latinum, Beryti Phoeniciorum*, 1895; A. J. MACLEAN, *A Dictionary of Vernacular Syriac, etc.*, Oxford, 1901.) Whatever be the ultimate relation of the Greek to the Semitic group, it is clear that the attested Greek secondary forms must be derived from primary forms which went out of use or accidentally escaped registration. The gloss *γερδοποιόν* = *textrinum*, which has been emended to *γερδοποιεῖον* = *textrinum* (the Latin word being used in the sense of *textrina*, as elsewhere), however it be taken, seems to presuppose a primary word \**γερδός* meaning “web.” The Syriac *gardā* = *tela* also deserves notice. On the other hand, Lucilius, as Meursius (s. v.) pointed out, differentiates *textor* and *gerdius* in the passage: “*curate domi sint Gerdius ancillae pueri zonarius textor*.” This, of course, supports Forcellini's view that *gerdius* meant “carder.” Possibly we should also assume a word \**γερδῆ* = “card,” “teasel,” from which all the forms except *γερδοποιόν* may be derived. One might be tempted to identify the base of *γέρδιος* with that of *κείρω*, “to clip.” Note that the latter is supposed to be cognate

have remained long in use in this adjectival sense in both ancient languages. The postulation of the coexistence of the assumed adjectival value with the attested substantival value presents no difficulty: cf. *μουσικός*, "musical" and also "scholar;" and *consularis*, "pertaining to the consul" and also "ex-consul." Similar parallels might be cited in great abundance from both Greek and Latin.

Summing up, it may be said that phonetic law unequivocally requires the etymon \**grēdius*, the derivation of which from *gerdius* = *γέρδιος* presents virtually no phonetic difficulty. A semasiological obstacle is the circumstance that the ancient word is attested as a substantive only, while the Italian word is an adjective. In view of the fact, however, that the ancient word is of rare occurrence in both Latin and Greek, while the Greek word is shown by its formation to have been originally, at least, an adjective, the assumption of an adjectival value for the Greek-Latin substratum certainly seems to be justified. But whether the apparent shift from the value of "weaver" to that of "weaver's" should be explained in this or in some other way, the assumed change of function is, after all, hardly violent enough to present material difficulty.

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with Latin *caro*, "to card;" *carduus*, "thistle." For the γ, cf. *γαμχός* from *κάμπτω*. At all hazards, it is probable that *γέρδιος* meant originally "pertaining to the web" or "pertaining to the card." The difference between these values and "pertaining to the weaver," "pertaining to the carder," is so slight that it may be overlooked, particularly since the sense of the Italian word may be readily derived from either member of either pair.